

Methodology and Fieldwork Practice (K001331)

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)

Credits 10.0

Study time 250 h

Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026

A (Year)

English

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Maeckelbergh, Marianne

PS05

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

[Master of Science in Teaching in Social Sciences\(main subject Political Science\)](#)

[Master of Science in Conflict and Development Studies](#)

crdts

offering

10

A

10

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Methodology, Research Methods, Fieldwork, Ethnography, Data, Ethics

Position of the course

This course is a core course of the programme: a compulsory course for all students in the Masters of Conflict and Development. It is a full year course, spread over both terms. The aim of this course is to teach methodology and not just methods; to teach students how to design an independent, fieldwork-based, qualitative (interpretive) research project from start to finish, including how to:

- *situate their own research within various epistemologies of research and theories of knowledge*
- *choose a research topic*
- *formulate a research question*
- *operationalize a research project*
- *gather research materials*
- *analyze research materials and formulate arguments*
- *do all of this in a way that pays specific attention to the complexities of research in settings of conflict, development and unequal power (between people, within countries and between the Global North and the Global South).*

Contents

The course consists of two parts (over two terms)

Term 1: From research interest to research design

Lectures (topics include):

- Introduction to common theories of knowledge and how these impact research design.
- Operationalization of research concepts.
- Constructing the "field" of research.
- Fieldwork methods and techniques.
- Ethics, power and positionality.

Seminars (topics include):

- Constructing your own "field" of research
- Identifying relevant concepts for your research
- Identifying research questions and subquestions
- Operationalization of research concepts

- Research ethics

Term 2: From Research Design to Fieldwork and Data Analysis

Seminars (topics include):

- Reflexive analysis of research methods and techniques
- Identifying conceptual themes in qualitative data
- Using narrative as an ethnographic tool

Independent fieldwork

- Finalizing research design/proposal
- Independent fieldwork – planned and carried out by the student
- Analysis of the fieldwork data
- Written fieldwork report

Initial competences

Familiarity with basics of social science research methods is required.

Final competences

1. situate a research project within a socio-historical context (ORL M1.6; M2.1)
2. operationalize a research project (OLR M1.6; M2.1; M2.2; M2.3; M5.1)
3. gather research materials using an ethnographic fieldwork methodology (ORL M.2.2; M.2.3; M6.1)
4. analyze research materials gathered during ethnographic fieldwork (ORL M2.4; M6.1)
5. deal consciously with one's own positionality as a researcher and the impact of the research on the local community (ORL M5.2; M6.1)
6. understand, be respectful of, and describe the complexities of research in settings of conflict, development and unequal power (ORL M2.4; M3.4; M4.3; M4.4; M5.2; M6.1)
7. report research findings and fieldwork in an academic and responsible manner (ORL M.2.4; M.4.1; M.4.3, M4.4; M5.2; M6.1)
8. deal consciously and reflexively with ethical challenges of fieldwork (ORL M1.6; M2.2; M2.3; M3.4; M4.1; M6.1)

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures: 12 hours

Seminars: 16.5 hours

Study hours (readings and assignments): 116.5 hours

Fieldwork and Independent Research Practice: 155 hours

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader

Indicative price: € 40

Optional: no

Language : English

Author : A.C.G.M. Robben & J.A. Sluka (eds.).

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Additional information: Readings will be made available via Ufora. We will also use Russel Bernard, H. (2006)

Research Methods in Anthropology AltaMira Press, and selected articles on specific methods and independent reading on students' own research topic.

References

Course content-related study coaching

Questions and answers during the lectures and seminars
Interactive counseling through UFORA

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period****Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Presentation, Written assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods**Term 1:****Continuous assessment:**

Students prepare and hand in assignments prior to each seminar. These assignments together form the final grade for the course. They are each worth 10% and must all be submitted in order to pass the course.

Term 2:**Continuous assessment:**

Students prepare and hand in assignments prior to each seminar. These assignments together form the final grade for the course. They are each worth 10% and must all be submitted in order to pass the course.

The presentation of the full research proposal during the seminar will also count for 10% towards the final grade.

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Written assignments.

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

Written assignments can be resubmitted during the second examination period. Students who do not complete one or more of the written assignments, cannot pass the course. If the student has completed but earned less than a 10/20 on any of the written assignments, they can no longer successfully pass the course. If the total final score is above 10/20, it will be reduced to the highest insufficient mark, which is a 9/20 and the student will have to re-submit all insufficient assignments in the second examination period in order to pass the course.

Calculation of the examination mark

The written seminar assignments make up 90% of the final mark for the course, and the seminar presentation makes up the remaining 10%.

Facilities for Working Students

- Once a student joins a specific seminar group the student must attend that specific seminar group (day and time), but your choice for seminar timing (and limits due to work) can be communicated to the course coordinator and will be accommodated whenever possible. Attendance at lectures is not mandatory.